LEGAL BUT NOT NECESSARILY AVAILABLE: ABORTION SERVICES AT STATE HOSPITALS AT TURKEY

Kadir Has University Gender and Women’s Studies Research Center
Legal But Not Necessarily Available: Abortion Services at State Hospitals in Turkey

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Findings

- Out of 431 state hospitals with departments of obstetrics and gynecology 7.8% provide abortion services without restriction as to reason, 78% provide abortion care if there is a medical necessity and 11.8% do not provide the service at all.
- Of the 58 education and research hospitals with departments of obstetrics and gynecology, 17.3% provide abortion services without restriction as to reason, 71.1% if there is a medical necessity and 11.4% do not provide the service at all.
- The regions of West Marmara and the East Blacksea, with a population of 1,462,444\(^2\) of women of childbearing age (15-49) do not have a single state hospital that provides abortion care without restriction as to reason.
- 53 of 81 provinces in Turkey do not have a state hospital that provides abortion care without restriction as to reason. (Adıyaman, Afyonkarahisar, Ağrı, Amasya, Artvin, Balıkesir, Bilecik, Bingöl, Bolu, Burdur, Bursa, Çanakkale, Çankırı, Edirne, Elazığ, Erzincan, Eskişehir, Gaziantep, Giresun, Gümüşhane, Hatay, Isparta, İçel (Mersin), Kars, Kastamonu, Kırklareli, Kırşehir, Kocaeli, Kütahya, Malatya, Kahramanmaraş, Mardin, Nevşehir, Ordu, Rize, Sakarya, Siirt, Sinop, Sivas, Tekirdağ, Tokat, Trabzon, Uşak, Van, Yozgat, Zonguldak, Aksaray, Bayburt, Kırıkkale, Batman, Yalova, Kilis, Osmaniye)

\(^2\) All of the population statistics used in this report have been taken from data available from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUİK).
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Introduction

Today in Turkey abortion is legal. The Law on Population Planning No. 2827 introduced in 1983 ended the legal prohibition on abortion that had been in place since the founding of the Republic. The law provides for abortion without restriction as to reason through ten weeks of pregnancy. If a woman is married spousal consent is required as is parental consent for those under age 18. If a pregnancy threatens a woman’s life or there is substantial fetal abnormality, abortion is permissible and the law states no gestational time limit. However, in such a case, the doctor must notify health authorities of the women’s identity, the procedure to be performed and the rationale before the procedure is performed, if possible, and in an emergency within notification must take place within twenty-four hours. For pregnancies that are the result of a crime, the Turkish criminal code allows for abortions through twenty weeks. Abortion care at state hospitals is covered by the state health insurance.

Since legalization, several generations of women have availed themselves of the right to legal abortion services in Turkey. Approximately 14% of Turkish women report having had at least one abortion in their lifetime. Yet, there have been a number of reports in recent years which have called into question the current availability of abortion services in Turkey, particularly in state hospitals. This study

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Purple Roof Foundation. Kürtaç yapıyor musunuz? “Hayır yapmiyoruz!”. (Do you perform abortions? No, we do not!). https://www.marcati.org.tr/tr/290-kurtaj-yapiyor-musunuz-hayir-yapmiyoruz; Bianet. 12 İlide Sadece 9 Kamu Hastanesi Yasaya Uygun
attempted to systematically answer the question of whether or not abortions are available in state hospitals in Turkey and under what conditions.

**Methodology**

We employed a mystery client telephone survey where we contacted 431 state hospitals in Turkey. Working with a list available from the Ministry of Health dated October 2015 and updated in January 2016, we created a list of hospitals for contact. At the time of the study there were 712 total state hospitals in Turkey. Specialist hospitals were removed (n=67) and then the sample was further refined to eliminate hospitals that did not have a department of obstetrics and gynecology, which is required for the provision of abortion services. The final sample consisted of 431 hospitals. Of the 431 hospitals which constituted the sample, 428 were contacted. A further 6 hospitals (1.4%) refused to provide information regarding abortion services over the phone demanding instead that someone appear in person to receive information.

Working with a prepared script, hospitals were contacted between October 2015 and April 2015. The telephone survey used a mystery client that asked to be directed to the department of obstetrics and gynecology. At that point, we the following questions: 1. “Are abortion services provided at the hospital?”; 2. “Is the procedure available without restriction to reason?”; 3. “Is it available in the case of a medical necessity?”; 4. If the answer to the previous were no in each case we asked for confirmation of the state “so, abortion services are not available under any circumstances”. To ensure standardization, the

same script was employed for each hospital. Using SPSS, the data were coded so that the survey responses could be analyzed according to hospital type and region, as well as the answer regarding the provision of abortion. Each answer provided in the survey was coded and accounted for in the data set. The data set was then analyzed for frequency and cross tabulations were performed. The results follow.
TURKEY

State Hospitals with Departments of Obstetrics/Gynecology Providing Abortion Services

- Without restriction as to reason: 78%
- No medical necessity: 11.8%
- Medical necessity: 7.8%
- No: 1.4%

LEGAL BUT NOT NECESSARILY AVAILABLE:
TURKEY

Teaching Hospitals with Departments of Obstetrics/Gynecology Providing Abortion Services

- Without restriction as to reason: 71.1%
- Medical necessity: 17.3%
- No: 11.4%
Hospitals Providing Abortion Services by Region

[Bar chart showing the distribution of hospitals providing abortion services by region.]
ADANA

Information
Total Hospitals.....................................................10
Education and Research Hospitals...................1
Population....................................................2,183,167
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...570,864

Without restriction as to reason
No
Medical Necessity

LEGAL BUT NOT NECESSARILY AVAILABLE:
Information
Total Hospitals...............................................7
Education and Research Hospitals...........1
Population........................................ 602,774
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...751

ADİYAMAN

ADİYAMAN

<p>| | | | |</p>
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- Without restriction as to reason
- No
- Medical necessity
- No doctor
AFYONKARAHİSAR

Information
Total Hospitals....................................................9
Education and Research Hospitals.................0
Population.................................................... 709,015
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...179,983
AĞRI

Information
Total Hospitals......................................................8
Education and Research Hospitals.......................0
Population................................................... 547,210
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)....128,388

- Without restriction as to reason
- No
- Medical necessity
AMASYA

**Information**

- Total No. Hospitals: 5
- Education and Research Hospitals: 1
- Population: 322,167
- Women of Childbearing Age (15-49): 128,388

![AMASYA Map](image)

![Bar Chart](image)

- Without restriction as to reason: 0
- No: 1
- Medical necessity: 4
ANKARA

Information

Total Hospitals........................................29
Education and Research Hospitals..............11
Population...................................................5,270,575
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49).1,456,477
ANTALYA

Information

Total Hospitals...........................................14
Education and Research Hospitals...............1
Population................................................2,288,456
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...619,937

Without restriction as to reason
No
Medical necessity
ARTVİN

Information

Total Hospitals....................................................6
Education and Research Hospitals...............0
Population.........................................................168,370
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...39,162

Without restriction as to reason  |  No  |  Medical necessity

- 0

4

2

0
AYDIN

Information

Total Hospitals...........................................11
Education and Research Hospitals............0
Population...................................................1,053,506
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)....260,656

![AYDIN Map Image]

Without restriction as to reason  No  Medical necessity  Refused to provide information
BALIKESİR

Information

Total Hospitals.....................................................17
Education and Research Hospitals..................0
Population......................................................1,186,688
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...283,579

BALIKESİR

Without restriction as to reason  No  Medical necessity
**BİLECİK**

**Information**

Total Hospitals: 4
Education and Research Hospitals: 0
Population: 212,361
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49): 52,706
BİNGÖL

Information

Total Hospitals.....................................................7
Education and Research Hospitals.................0
Population..............................................267,184
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...70,953

Without restriction as to reason | No | Medical necessity
Information

Total Hospitals...................................................7
Education and Research Hospitals............0
Population......................................................340,449
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...83,017
BOLU

Information

Total Hospitals: 4
Education and Research Hospitals: 1
Population: 291,095
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49): 74,032

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Without restriction as to reason: 0
No Medical necessity: 2
Medical necessity: 2
BURDUR

Information

Total Hospitals...................................................4
Education and Research Hospitals..............0
Population.....................................................258,339
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...62,258

LEGAL BUT NOT NECESSARILY AVAILABLE:

- 0
- 1
- 3

Without restriction as to reason  No  Medical necessity
BURSA

Information

Total Hospitals.....................................................14
Education and Research Hospitals...................1
Population...........................................................2,842,547
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)....756,489

Without restriction as to reason  No  Medical necessity
ÇANAKKALE

Information
Total Hospitals.....................................................10
Education and Research Hospitals....................0
Population..................................................513,341
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...124,060
LEGAL BUT NOT NECESSARILY AVAILABLE:

ÇANKIRI

Information

Total Hospitals....................................................4
Education and Research Hospitals.....................0
Population..................................................180,945
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...41,524
 información

Total Hospitals..................................................8
Education and Research Hospitals.............1
Population..................................................525,180
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49).....125,008
DENİZLİ

Information

Total Hospitals..............................10
Education and Research Hospitals........0
Population.................................993,442
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)....260,063
**DIYARBAKIR**

**Information**

Total Hospitals: 8
Education and Research Hospitals: 1
Population: 1,654,196
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49): 430,838

![Graph showing the distribution of various categories in DIYARBAKIR.](image)
Information

Total Hospitals....................................................3
Education and Research Hospitals.....................0
Population..........................................................402,537
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49).................98,023
ELAZIĞ

Information

Total Hospitals......................................................5
Education and Research Hospitals.....................1
Population..........................................................574,304
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...152,743
Information
Total Hospitals: 3
Education and Research Hospitals: 1
Population: 222,918
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49): 56,545
ERZURUM

Information

Total Hospitals....................................................14
Education and Research Hospitals..................1
Population.........................................................762,321
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...197,725

Without restriction as to reason  No  Medical Necessity  Refused to provide information
ESKİŞEHİR

Information

Total Hospitals.....................................................4
Education and Research Hospitals...............0
Population.........................................................826,716
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...........219,361

Graph: Without restriction as to reason  No  Medical Necessity
GAZİANTEP

Information

Total Hospitals: 9
Education and Research Hospitals: 1
Population: 1,931,836
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49): 490,827
Gireshun

Information

Total Hospitals..................................................10
Education and Research Hospitals..................0
Population......................................................426,686
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...99,878
GÜMÜŞHANE

Information

Total Hospitals....................................................3
Education and Research Hospitals......................0
Population.......................................................151,449
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...................39,023

Without restriction as to reason
No
Medical Necessity
HAKKARİ

Information

Total Hospitals.....................................................3
Education and Research Hospitals.................0
Population..............................................................278,775
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49).............69,433
HATAY

Information

Total Hospitals....................................................11
Education and Research Hospitals.................0
Population...............................................................1,533,507
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...390,188
ISPARTA

Information

Total Hospitals......................................................4
Education and Research Hospitals......................0
Population.............................................................421,766
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)........106,537
İÇEL (MERSİN)

Information

Total Hospitals......................................................11
Education and Research Hospitals......................0
Population..................................................1,745,221
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49).........455,076

Without restriction as to reason
No
Medical Necessity
İSTANBUL

Information

Total Hospitals.......................................................43
Education and Research Hospitals....................17
Population.........................................................14,657,434
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...4,168,828

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without restriction as to reason | No | Medical Necessity
İZMİR

Information

Total Hospitals.......................................................28
Education and Research Hospitals.........................4
Population............................................................4,168,415
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...1,100,854

LEGAL BUT NOT NECESSARILY AVAILABLE:
**KARS**

### Information

- Total Hospitals: 6
- Education and Research Hospitals: 0
- Population: 292,660
- Women of Childbearing Age (15-49): 70,954

![KARS map](image)
KASTAMONU

Information

Total Hospitals..................................................11
Education and Research Hospitals............0
Population..............................................372,633
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...85,210

Without restriction as to reason
No
Medical necessity
**KAYSERİ**

**Information**

Total Hospitals.......................................................7
Education and Research Hospitals......................1
Population......................................................... 1,341,056
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)....350, 237

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**Chart**

- **1** without restriction as to reason
- **5** No
- **1** Medical Necessity
Information

Total Hospitals...................................................5
Education and Research Hospitals.................0
Population......................................................346,973
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)..............84,808
KIRŞEHİR

Information

Total Hospitals...................................................3
Education and Research Hospitals................1
Population......................................................225,562
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)..................56,786

LEGAL BUT NOT NECESSARILY AVAILABLE:
KOCAELİ

Information

Total Hospitals......................................................9
Education and Research Hospitals...................1
Population......................................................1,780,055
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)....486,425
KONYA

Information

Total Hospitals....................................................20
Education and Research Hospitals...................1
Population.....................................................2,130,544
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)..............556,246

[Bar chart and map showing data distribution]
KÜTAHYA

Information

Total Hospitals.......................................................5
Education and Research Hospitals....................1
Population..................................................571,463
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)....147,057
MALATYA

Information

Total Hospitals.....................................................8
Education and Research Hospitals......................0
Population.....................................................772,904
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...200,465
MANİSA

Information

Total Hospitals....................................................14
Education and Research Hospitals...............0
Population..........................................................1,380,366
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...348,407

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[Diagram showing hospital categories and their numbers]
KAHRAMANMARAŞ

Information

Total Hospitals.........................................................7
Education and Research Hospitals.............0
Population.......................................................1,096,610
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)........348,407
MARDİN

Information

Total Hospitals.....................................................9
Education and Research Hospitals.................0
Population.........................................................796,591
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49).............202,452
MUĞLA

Information
Total Hospitals.....................................................10
Education and Research Hospitals.........................1
Population..........................................................908,877
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...228,010
**MUŞ**

*Information*

Total Hospitals................................. 6
Education and Research Hospitals.......... 0
Population........................................... 408,728
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)... 99,593

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![Map of MUŞ](image.png)
**NEVŞEHİR**

**Information**

- Total Hospitals: 2
- Education and Research Hospitals: 0
- Population: 286,767
- Women of Childbearing Age (15-49): 72,404
NIĞDE

Information

Total Hospitals....................................................4
Education and Research Hospitals.................0
Population............................................346,114
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)....88,205

Without restriction as to reason  |  No  |  Medical Necessity

1  |  2  |  1
Information

Total Hospitals.................................11
Education and Research Hospitals..........1
Population........................................728,949
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...173,169
RİZE

Information

Total Hospitals...................................................5
Education and Research Hospitals..............1
Population..................................................328,979
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...82,568

No Medical Necessity
SAKARYA

Information
Total Hospitals...................................................12
Education and Research Hospitals.......................1
Population.........................................................953,181
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...250,142
SAMSUN

Information

Total Hospitals.................................16
Education and Research Hospitals..........1
Population.........................................1,279,884
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)......327,081

Without restriction as to reason
No
Medical Necessity
Siirt

Information

Total Hospitals...................................................5
Education and Research Hospitals..............0
Population.........................................................320,351
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)........77,367
SINOP

Information

Total Hospitals....................................................6
Education and Research Hospitals.................0
Population............................................204,133
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)....44,602

LEGAL BUT NOT NECESSARILY AVAILABLE:
SİVAS

Information

Total Hospitals......................................................9
Education and Research Hospitals....................0
Population............................................................618,617
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49).............155,657

Without restriction as to reason
No
Medical Necessity
TEKİRDAĞ

Information

Total Hospitals......................................................9
Education and Research Hospitals..................0
Population.........................................................937,910
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)....245,447
TOKAT

Information

Total Hospitals......................................................7
Education and Research Hospitals.................0
Population.........................................................593,990
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)............145,151
Information

Total Hospitals......................................................8
Education and Research Hospitals.....................1
Population.........................................................768,417
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...............192,727
TUNCELİ

Information

Total Hospitals.................................................... 1
Education and Research Hospitals......................... 0
Population.................................................. 86,076
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)........... 19,492

Without restriction as to reason
No
Medical Necessity
** ŞANLIURFA**

**Information**

Total Hospitals....................................................13  
Education and Research Hospitals..............1  
Population..................................................1,892,320  
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...........456,855

### SANLIURFA Chart

- Without restriction as to reason
- No
- Medical Necessity

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UŞAK

Information
Total Hospitals...................................................4
Education and Research Hospitals..............0
Population.......................................................353,048
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...90,077
VAN

Information

Total Hospitals....................................................10
Education and Research Hospitals..................1
Population.......................................................1,096,397
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...275,051

LEGAL BUT NOT NECESSARILY AVAILABLE:

Without restriction as to reason  No  Medical Necessity

VAN
YOZGAT

Information

Total Hospitals.................................................... 10
Education and Research Hospitals.................. 0
Population................................................ 419,440
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...100,919

YOZGAT

Without restriction as to reason  No  Medical Necessity
ZONGULDAK

Information

Total Hospitals.....................................................7
Education and Research Hospitals....................0
Population...................................................595,907
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)............150,656
AKSARAY

Information

Total Hospitals....................................................4
Education and Research Hospitals.......................0
Population......................................................386,514
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49).................98,897
BAYBURT

Information

Total Hospitals...................................................1
Education and Research Hospitals............0
Population...................................................78,550
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)......19,656

LEGAL BUT NOT NECESSARILY AVAILABLE:

Without restriction as to reason  No  Medical Necessity
KARAMAN

Information

Total Hospitals...............................2
Education and Research Hospitals........0
Population.......................................242,196
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...62,422
Information

Total Hospitals...................................................2
Education and Research Hospitals.................0
Population...................................................270,271
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...........68,450
LEGAL BUT NOT NECESSARILY AVAILABLE:

BATMAN

Information

Total Hospitals.....................................................5
Education and Research Hospitals...............0
Population................................................566,633
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...146,068

Without restriction as to reason
No 
Medical Necessity 
Refused to provide information 
No response
Information

Total Hospitals......................................................6
Education and Research Hospitals...............0
Population.........................................................490,184
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...116,839
BARTIN

Information
Total Hospitals....................................................1
Education and Research Hospitals.................0
Population.........................................................190,708
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...47,402

Without restriction as to reason  No  Medical Necessity  No Response
## ARDAHAN

### Information

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### Graph

- **ARDAHAN**

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*Note: The graph represents data distribution across different categories.*
Information

Total Hospitals...................................................2
Education and Research Hospitals...............0
Population..............................................192,435
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...47,022

IĞDIR

Without restriction as to reason  No  Medical Necessity  Refused to provide information
YALOVA

Information

Total Hospitals ................................................... 2
Education and Research Hospitals ................. 0
Population ...................................................... 233,009
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49) ... 59,221
KARABÜK

Information
Total Hospitals....................................................3
Education and Research Hospitals.................0
Population...............................................236,978
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)....60,482
KILIS

Information

Total Hospitals...................................................1
Education and Research Hospitals.............0
Population......................................................130,655
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...32,952
OSMANİYE

Information

Total Hospitals.................................3
Education and Research Hospitals...........0
Population........................................512,873
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...128,204
DÜZCE

Information

Total Hospitals...................................................2
Education and Research Hospitals........0
Population....................................................360,388
Women of Childbearing Age (15-49)...92,642